(e) No targets are set for tourists (domestic and foreign) to visit Rajasthan. Tourist arrivals to the State in the last four years are as under:-

Year	Domestic	Foreign	Total
2005	1,87,87,298	11,31,164	199,18,462
2006	2,34,83,287	12,20,164	247,03,451
2007	2,59,20,529	14,01,042	273,21,571
2008 (up to June 08)	1,11,15,171	7,98,368	119,13,539

Archaeological exploration in Sri Lanka

†438. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:
DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware about the news "Rawan Ke Ghar Ram" released by Tourism Department of the Sri Lanka Government and telecasted by India TV on 17 January, 2008;

(b) whether Tourism Department of Sri Lanka has issued any information leaflet, C.D., etc. in respect of the above;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether Government of India together with Sri Lanka Government would conduct archaeological exploration/ investigations in respect of characters/ tourist sites related to the story of Sri Ram?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) During the South Asia Tourism and Travel Exchange held in Delhi from April 18-20, 2008, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Board had distributed compact discs and brochures promoting destinations related to Ramayana trail in Sri Lanka.

(d) No Such proposal is under consideration.

Pending tourism projects in Rajasthan

†439. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the details of several projects pending with Government for sanction relating to the development and promotion of tourism in Rajasthan, project-wise;

(b) the necessary action taken by Government so far for sanctioning these proposals; and

(c) by when several tourist related projects of the State will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, extends Central Financial Assistance to project proposals

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

received from the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations which are complete in all respects as per the scheme guidelines, subject to *inter-se* priority and availability of funds.

In the year 2008-09, Central Financial Assistance of Rs. 721.98 lakh has been sanctioned to the Government of Rajasthan.

(c) Implementation of projects is primarily the responsibility of State Government/Union Territory Administrations. However, Ministry of Tourism also monitors the progress of projects with officials from the concerned State Governments/Union Territory Administrations through site visits and review meetings from time to time.

Opening of Andaman and Nicobar Islands for tourism

440. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any fresh proposal under consideration to open a large number of Andaman and Nicobar Islands for tourism;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) Tourism is being developed and promoted in a phased manner taking into account security, forest regulations and restrictions as per provisions of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956.

International tourists arrival in the country

441. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country's share in international tourist arrivals continues to remain dismally low;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps Government proposes to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) to (c) The share of India in international tourist arrivals increased from 0.34% in 2002 to 0.56% in 2007. Infrastructural constraints that inhibit larger inflow of foreign tourists to India are being addressed in the following manner:-

- Development of tourism sites under the Plan schemes of infrastructure development for tourist circuits and destinations;
- Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure, particularly that for budget hotels;
- Strengthening of the existing Institutes of Hotel Management/ Food Craft Institutes and setting up new ones to meet the manpower requirements of the hospitality sector.

In addition, Ministry of Tourism also coordinates with Ministries of Railways, Civil Aviation, Road Transport and Highways, Urban Development, etc. for convergence of projects to ensure holistic and integrated development of tourism infrastructure.